



Pembrokeshire Friends of the Earth

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Valley Road
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Henry Tufnell MP
House of Commons
London

April 3rd 2026

Dear Mr Tufnell,

Re: North Sea oil and gas.

I am writing to you on behalf of our members and supporters of which there are over 100.

In an article published in The Sun newspaper on 22 March, you called for the renewed drilling of oil and gas in the North Sea claiming that this would “kickstart economic growth”. This is a viewpoint that finds support in the right-wing tabloids, with Reform UK and the Conservative Party, and with Donald Trump, but not with experts who base their conclusions on thoroughly researched evidence. We would include Ed Miliband in the latter.

The influential Carbon Brief has produced a summary of this evidence in the briefing paper, *Factcheck Nine false or misleading myths about North Sea oil and gas*. This exposes serious flaws in your argument. The paper can be found here:

<https://www.carbonbrief.org/factcheck-nine-false-or-misleading-myths-about-north-sea-oil-and-gas/>

Below are just a few examples from the paper.

In 2022, the Climate Change Committee wrote, in a letter to a government minister at the time [1], that increased UK extraction of oil and gas would be unlikely to “materially affect global oil or gas

prices, as the UK energy market is highly connected to international markets and potential supply is relatively small”. The letter also stated:

“The best approach to reducing consumers’ exposure to fossil fuel prices is to make systematic efforts to reduce UK demand for fossil fuels, through policies that enable and encourage a cost-effective switch to low-carbon alternatives and improved efficiency.”

A senior research fellow at the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, told Carbon Brief that “you’re not going to bring prices down versus the current level, because you’re not going to be able to produce very much more [from the North Sea]”. [2]

The UK Energy Research Centre explained in a recent note [3]:

“Squeezing additional oil and gas production from the UK may be technically possible, but it will have a negligible impact on the UK cost of living”. Instead, it said that “demand reduction should be a core focus of UK gas security”.

The National Energy System Operator has stated that meeting the U.K.’s net-zero target (which The Sun opposes) would cut the country’s dependency on imported gas to 78% below current levels, whereas failing to decarbonise would see imports rising by a third as production falls.[4]

The claim that North Sea gas produces a lot less CO₂ than imported gas is misleading as, once CO₂ from gas combustion is taken into account, emissions are just 15% lower. The Climate Change Committee concluded that this small “emissions advantage” could be wiped out if increased UK production led to more fossil fuel production overall. [5]

The Committee has also analysed how jobs will be affected by the transition to net-zero. It concluded that job losses in the fossil fuel sector would be outweighed by “extensive job creation” in sectors such as renewable energy, retrofitting and electric vehicles. [6]

The Carbon Brief paper also points out that, according to official figures, it takes an estimated 28 years for new licences to result in new oil and gas production.

We have included here just a sample of the strong arguments presented in the Carbon Brief paper. We urge you to read the full paper and to reconsider the opinions you expressed in The Sun article.

We are particularly disappointed to see a Labour MP undermining the vital work of Ed Miliband in this way.

And finally on a personal note I no longer feel able to continue my life long support of Labour in the up coming Senedd elections in the light of your support for Tory and Reform attacks on climate change policies.

Yours sincerely

Dr Rebecca Cadbury

Treasurer and Membership Secretary of Pembrokeshire Friends of the Earth

NOTES

1. Letter to Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
<https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Letter-to-Kwasi-Kwarteng-Climate-Compatibility-of-New-Oil-and-Gas-Fields.pdf>
2. Factcheck Nine false or misleading myths about North Sea oil and gas, from Carbon Brief
<https://www.carbonbrief.org/factcheck-nine-false-or-misleading-myths-about-north-sea-oil-and-gas/>
3. Drilling for Oil and Gas Will not Reduce Bills or Deliver Energy Security. Here's Why 19 March 2026
<https://ukerc.ac.uk/news/drilling-for-oil-and-gas-will-not-reduce-bills-or-deliver-energy-security-heres-why/>
4. <https://www.carbonbrief.org/net-zero-scenario-is-cheapest-option-for-uk-says-energy-system-operator/>

5. <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Letter-to-Kwasi-Kwarteng-Climate-Compatibility-of-New-Oil-and-Gas-Fields.pdf>

6. A Net Zero Workforce
<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/a-net-zero-workforce/>